

Five Tips for New Moms

Mother's Day is a special time for new moms. But this can also be a stressful time for new parents—moms and dads—facing the responsibility of caring for a newborn or infant.



Your health care provider can be a great resource. A good time to check in is during preventive “well-child” health visits with your child’s pediatrician, says Donna L. Snyder, M.D., F.A.A.P., a pediatrician with FDA’s Division of Pediatric and Maternal Health. These visits can continue at intervals throughout childhood and adolescence.

But if you’re between appointments and think your child is sick, or just have questions, contact your health care provider to confirm what to do next, Snyder says. And consider these five tips:

Get Expert Advice Before Giving Medicine to Your Baby

Certain medications may not be appropriate for your baby, so you should ask your health care provider before giving your child any medication, says Snyder. If he or she has recommended a medicine for your infant, ask questions to be sure you use the right dose.

“Even if babies are under the age where you’d expect them to be able to get to your medication, get into the habit of putting medication out of their reach.”

Store Medications Safely

Store any medicines that you or your baby may take out of reach. “You want to keep medications out of reach of your child,” says Snyder, who notes that babies can start to crawl as early as 5 to 6 months. “But even if babies are under the age when you’d expect them to be able to get to your medication, get into the habit of putting medication out of their reach,” she advises.

Also read all storage instructions. “For instance, some antibiotics need to be kept in the refrigerator,” Snyder says. “So you want to make sure you’re storing it according to the instructions.” If you have questions about how to safely store a medicine, contact your pharmacist or other health care provider.

Give Medications Properly

Use the appropriate dosing device—such as an oral syringe, not a regular kitchen spoon—to give the recommended amount of medicine. Some products are packaged with these devices, but devices are also available for purchase over the counter. “If your baby is prescribed a specific amount of medicine, make sure you measure and give the specific amount using a dosing

device,” Snyder adds. And talk to your baby’s pharmacist or other health care provider if you have questions.

If You Take Medication, Seek Breastfeeding Advice

“If you are taking medications, it’s important to ask your health care provider whether it’s okay to breastfeed,” says Leyla Sahin, M.D., an obstetrician with FDA’s Division of Pediatric and Maternal Health. You should ask about any prescription or over-the-counter products, including supplements. Stopping a medication can be dangerous for some women with chronic health problems, Sahin notes, but some medications can pass through the breast milk and may not be safe for your baby. So check with your health care provider if you are breastfeeding, or plan to breastfeed, and you are taking any medication.


Take Care of Yourself

You may feel like you’re devoting most waking (and sleeping) hours to your baby, but try to squeeze in time for yourself. Not getting enough rest can be an issue if you have a new baby. “Sleep when the baby sleeps and take naps during the day,” Sahin recommends. “If you’re a new mom feeling constantly very sad, it could


be a sign of postpartum depression,” she adds, so you should talk to your health care provider to get help if needed.

Also it’s important to schedule and keep your six-week postpartum appointment with your health care provider, Sahin says.

Remember, your first year of motherhood may not be perfect but you can adjust to this new stage. Find more helpful advice from FDA’s Office of Women’s Health (http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ByAudience/ForWomen/WomensHealthTopics/ucm117976.htm#Other_Helpful_Tips).

“Keep in mind that being a new mom is a transition period that may be stressful,” Sahin adds. “But take the time to celebrate being a new mom.” 

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